

**House International Relations Committee
Hearing on UN Reform
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**Testimony of Timothy E. Wirth
President, UN Foundation**

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Lantos and Members of the Committee for the opportunity to be here today to discuss the important topic of how we can strengthen and modernize the UN to better meet the challenges of the 21st century.

The UN Foundation, where I serve as President, is a function of Ted Turner's philanthropy. It came into being in 1997 at a time of significant crisis in the U.S.-UN relationship. As you will remember, at that time the U.S. had more than \$1 billion in arrears to the UN and we were substantially behind on our peacekeeping obligations as well. Working over the next two-and-a-half years with Senators Helms and Biden, and then on the Helms-Biden legislation with Ambassador Holbrooke and Ambassador Negroponte, and with significant personal funds (31 million dollars) from Mr. Turner which covered the transition costs at the UN, Helms-Biden became a reality. Mr. Chairman, I also want to recognize the strong leadership and commitment of this committee, which was critical to getting the Helms-Biden payments released by Congress.

The UN Foundation's mission reflects the breadth and depth of the responsibilities the world has asked the UN to undertake. We have a budget of about \$120 million a year. Fifty million comes from Mr. Turner; the rest comes from a wide variety of public and private partners for whom we are a useful portal and catalyst for engaging people to work with the UN and UN system. For example, we have brought in a number of private sector partners ranging from Vodafone to The Times of India, Nike, and Coca-Cola.

We focus substantively on children's health, with the World Health Organization and UNICEF. Major partners include Rotary on polio and the Red Cross and the Center for Disease Control on measles. We work on HIV/AIDS and reproductive health issues with UNAIDS and UNFPA, focused in particular on the ability of people to protect themselves and on women's empowerment. We work on a range of environmental issues with UNDP, UNEP and UNESCO, and with a special focus on energy, security, and climate issues through our Energy Future Coalition. We also have a variety of initiatives on human rights and governance; for example we have worked to strengthen the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and recently helped the American Jewish Committee bring world leaders from the Jewish community together with UN leadership at the UN's headquarters in New York.

I cite the scope of our work because it provides a picture of the diversity of UN activities which are broadly supported by the population of the United States. With a team led by Bill McInturff of Public Opinion Strategies, we do extensive research on

public opinion. We know, for example, that over the last 50 years there has been steady support of the UN at about the 70 percent level among the American public. And it's no wonder why when you consider just some of the recent ways the UN has helped advance U.S. interests:

- ? The UN helped legitimize and provide the technical support necessary to have democratic elections in Iraq in January;
- ? The UN coordinated the massive international response to the Southeast Asia tsunami, while its agencies on the ground prevented the outbreak of disease that would have killed more than the tsunami itself, and the UN is coordinating the longer-term work necessary to help the region recover economically;
- ? The UN Security Council, with U.S. and French leadership, put pressure on the Syrian government to force its withdrawal from Lebanon;
- ? The UN was instrumental in containing diseases like SARS and avian flu;
- ? UN peacekeeping missions have brought stability that has allowed some nations in the most brutal conflicts, such as Sierra Leone and East Timor, to rebuild and hold democratic elections—and paved the way for peacekeepers to leave these two places by the end of this year.

These activities support international and U.S. interests, and we know from the research that Americans believe the UN is an institution that helps to share the burden and perform important work that might not be practical or appropriate for the U.S. to take on alone.

Yet we also know that from the time of the Iraq debate through the emergence of the Oil-for-Food issue, public support for the UN has dropped, and we face a challenge point in the U.S.-UN relationship. Americans do not always know or understand all the ways the UN works with the U.S. They believe the UN needs to be much more effective and are justifiably concerned about recent allegations of corruption in the UN ranks.

This history of public support for the UN, and current concerns about its effectiveness, presents a good environment for UN reform. The American public is ready for changes, ready for a stronger UN, and is supportive of Administrative and Congressional efforts to help strengthen the UN. Before I comment on actual reforms, I want to make five points that will be essential to a constructive reform process that achieves meaningful and lasting results:

1) We are at a unique moment to reform the UN. Recent events, from the Iraq debate to the recent stories surrounding the Oil-for-Food Program, have exposed weaknesses in the ways Member States work together to address global challenges, and in the way the UN manages and implements its work. Various experts are focusing on these issues, including the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) Task Force on the UN, and are putting forward some creative ideas that should be seriously considered. The Secretary-General also put forward some bold recommendations in his recent report, "In Larger Freedom." The UN is committed to change in a way I have not witnessed during my seven years at the UN Foundation and my previous years in the House and Senate and as Undersecretary of State for Global Affairs. In the past, the spotlight of the U.S. Congress

has been important to applying the pressure needed to get reforms done, and I know this committee has taken on the issue of UN reform in a serious way. I hope the Congress will play a constructive role this year in encouraging U.S. leadership in the reform process underway at the UN, which brings me to my next point.

2) U.S. leadership is critical. The U.S. Government must address reform comprehensively and aggressively. It must raise the priority issues, such as the overhaul of the Human Rights Commission, the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission, and management reform through all diplomatic means available. The U.S. Mission to the UN must provide Washington with regular updates on the discussion in New York. The UN's Millennium Summit in September provides an historic opportunity for world leaders to come together to address these issues; we all should urge the President to attend and to reinforce the U.S. commitment to the UN and to UN reform. Reform is not an event; it is a long process that requires concerted U.S. leadership and diplomacy. When the U.S. pays attention, does its homework and builds the broader coalitions behind the changes it wants, the evidence is overwhelming that the UN responds.

3) The United States government itself can and should be an example of reform.

- ? We should pay our dues to the UN in full and on time. The Committee will remember that under the conditions of the so-called "Stockman Amendment," passed nearly 20 years ago, we are always a year late in paying our share of the bills. I don't have to tell you that this tardiness is not only costly to everyone else in the UN, who have to cover the annual shortfall, but late payment does not reinforce our own demands for open, dependable and modern accounting at the UN.
- ? We also should beware of arguments that the threat of withholding of promised money provides leadership and leverage for change. Almost every one of the reforms that must be made at the UN requires significant diplomatic negotiation, which will be inhibited or even discouraged by a strategy of withholding funds. Change and reform require firm, consistent policy and strong, persistent diplomacy – threatening to withhold funds is an idea that sounds good if you say it fast enough, but in fact is most often cost-ineffective and counterproductive. The climate for reform at the UN is now so positive that the U.S. should be joining these forces and leading reform, not threatening and belittling the efforts. Leadership and vision is now the most needed ingredient for the UN's reform process.
- ? Further, it is important to remember that some of the recommended reforms will cost money up front, while they save money over time. For example, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Democracy Fund, and the urgently needed personnel reforms all require venture reform capital up front, and all will result in needed progressive change and cost-saving over time.
- ? A final point on funding: the Congress should insist on much closer coordination with the Administration on peacekeeping commitments. I know from personal experience that the Administration often instructs its Permanent Representative at the UN to vote for Security Council

peacekeeping initiatives, of which the U.S. is then obligated to pay 27% of the costs. But the Congress often doesn't have timely information and consultation about these commitments, and as a result almost every year the Congress faces a major shortfall in peacekeeping obligations. This in turn complicates our ability to persuade other nations to join in UN reform efforts, since we ourselves are almost always well behind in paying bills for the very peacekeeping operations that we often initiated and must agree to through our vote on the Security Council. The Administration must work on getting quicker and better information about the decisions made in New York in the Security Council to those on Capitol Hill who are responsible for authorizing and appropriating the funding.

4) Reforms must be targeted to the right places. For example, some management reforms can be done by carefully working with the Secretary-General and the Secretariat. Others, like the urgently needed transformation of the Human Rights Commission and the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, will have to go through the General Assembly. Many of the hardest issues, like the expansion of the Security Council, will be decided by Member States, not the Secretary-General and his leadership team. If we in the U.S. are serious about UN reform, we have to start framing the ideas and proposals, and we need to start working the process, at all levels and in all regions of the world. We need to build the coalitions necessary for success; again, when we have done this in the past we have succeeded. When we are faint in our resolve or timid in our leadership, change is much less likely to come about.

5) Finally, the reform package must be robust and comprehensive. This is reflected by the work of the USIP Task Force and its five working groups, and in the recent report of the Secretary-General. We need a comprehensive package of reforms that takes into account the scope of the UN's work and the interests of its many Member States. This includes management reforms, but also requires the strengthening of the UN's capacity in human rights and in areas like peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and a new understanding of the linkages between development and security.

I know this Committee has looked at the proposals of the High-Level Panel and those in the Secretary-General's report, and I will comment on a few of the more high-profile issues:

- ? It is critical to address the failures of the UN Human Rights Commission, and to replace it with a Human Rights Council with performance criteria for membership.
- ? It is essential that the High Commissioner for Human Rights be strengthened. That office was created less than 15 years ago, with a lot of resistance. It is still a very threadbare office carried by the strength of individuals like its current leader, Louise Arbour, but with very little institutional capacity to help spur needed change around the world.
- ? Reform must also embrace the full inclusion of Israel as a normal Member State. Israel, as the only Member State that is not a member of one of the regional groups, has no chance of being elected to serve on main organs

such as the Security Council or the Economic and Social Council, and we must work to rectify this anomaly.

- ? The Democracy Fund, proposed by President Bush and endorsed by the Secretary-General, is also an important vehicle for enhancing and supporting the spread of democracy around the world. The creation of a Democracy Caucus will also strengthen the UN and help to strengthen the U.S.' hand in working through the UN system to advance democratic principles.
- ? The Peacebuilding Commission is also a good idea. Just as the U.S. government is currently reviewing its own capacity to respond to rebuilding war-torn societies through the creation of an office at the Department of State to coordinate this work, so should the UN be seeking a means to improve both its capacity and expert knowledge for specific countries. In peacekeeping, it is important to examine which parts of the Brahimi report recommendations remain to be completed. That was a very good piece of work with some outstanding recommendations still to be fulfilled. Also, the new report by former peacekeeper Prince Zeid of Jordan must be seriously considered by all Member States to address the devastating revelations about the conduct of certain UN peacekeepers in Congo and elsewhere.

Looking at management reform, I know Congress has focused much attention on transparency, oversight and accountability at the UN, and Mark Malloch Brown provided us today with a good overview of what is being done in those areas. There is clearly a need for a stronger oversight function. The UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) is a relatively new office created with U.S. leadership in 1994. Now is the time to conduct a review of its performance, perhaps using someone like former GAO Director Chuck Bowsher or his European colleagues. The final report of the Independent Inquiry Committee on the Oil-for-Food Program comes out later this summer and will include more recommendations on how the UN can be strengthened, and the Secretary-General has stated his commitment to implementing each of these recommendations.

In the area of personnel, the Secretariat and the Secretary-General need authority to move people. They have to have the authority to hire faster and they have to have the capability to fire faster. They need a buy-out program, which might take the form of a targeted program to transition out those whose skills are not as well suited for the UN we need today. The Secretary-General should also be given a means to hire young professionals and create a cadre of talented young workers who can lead the UN in the 21st century. The UN Foundation has supported the convening of such a group of young UN professionals, but this is only a first step in what is clearly a growing need at the UN.

It is also important to empower the Deputy Secretary-General. That office needs more clearly defined authority over the strategic planning of UN operations. It is also terribly important to revamp the Department of Public Information. Every political institution (and the UN is one of those) needs a constituency, and needs to be able to explain what it's doing to a constituency. This is the UN's equivalent of public

diplomacy and it represents the challenge facing Karen Hughes at the State Department. This function demands very careful attention as the UN attempts to explain its complicated missions to people around the world, where the high demand for information is met with difficult challenges in getting information to the intended audiences.

Finally, I might suggest that the U.S. needs to rethink the way it works through the UN. We should pay increased attention – as this Committee has done – to the quality of the Foreign Service officers going to assignments in international organizations and the UN in particular, and how they are rewarded within our current State Department reward structure. As a general proposition, if you are a talented Foreign Service officer, you get rewarded if you are in one of the Regional Bureaus. However, you typically do not get rewarded if you work in international organizations or in refugees, human rights, environment, or narcotics. Yet it is this kind of assignment and this kind of work that must demand the best people. The promotional criteria in our Foreign Service system have to change if we are going to draw our best people into the UN and its very important work.

And also, you will remember the Goldwater-Nichols legislation and how important that was in changing the interdisciplinary nature of senior officers in the military. A similar thing would be a very important addition to the way we run our State Department.

The UN works far better when the U.S. pays attention and I think we all believe that an effective UN is in our interest. Thank you for the time and the attention you are focusing on this important topic. I look forward to answering your questions and to working with you as the reform process continues.